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ABSTRACT

High schocl level instructional physical education programs in the state of Chio are examined to determine the quality of their organizational structure and curricula offerings. Data collected from a 74.3 percent questionnaire response from 70 Ohio school systems describes the functional arrangement of the school programs based on the sex of the instructor. Other areas of inquiry include: (1) general information; (2) organization of the instructional class; (3) physical education facilities and equipment; (4) problem areas in physical education; and (5) specific course offerings of various schools. Seven conclusions are drawn from the survey results, and four specific suggestions for the implementation of the research findings into the practical operation of Ohio schools are given. (LH)

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STATUS OF INSTRUCTIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN OHIO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Presented: Midwest Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation Convention, April, 1979.

By

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STATUS OF INSTRUCTIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS
IN OHIO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Problem. The problem of the study was to determine the current status of the instructional physical education programs at the senior high school level in the state of Ohio and to compare the current data with those of two previous survey studies in Ohio. (3, 5)

Procedures. Initial planning involved discussions with Mr. Robert Holland, State Consultant for Physical Education in Ohio, with professional colleagues at both the public school and university levels, and with officers of the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. A need was identified for a study to be undertaken to determine the current status of senior high school physical education instructional programs in the state.

A review of the literature revealed several instruments designed for the purpose of determining the status of senior high school physical education programs. From these, the mailed questionnaire technique was selected for the collection of the data in this study.

Permission was granted by the Ohio Advisory Council for Girls' Secondary Physical Education to revise the questionnaire developed for the 1968 study of girls' secondary school physical education. In addition, permission was obtained to include selected items from the 1955 study of Ohio physical education by Mand. After a tentative revision, the questionnaire was sub-

mitted to a jury of experts for their consideration and recommendation. A final step in the preparation of the instrument was a pilot study to establish an estimate of instrument reliability.

A copy of the finalized questionnaire was mailed to the principal of each of the 751 public senior high schools in the state of Ohio. Included in this mailing were 302 City high schools, 49 Exempted Village high schools, and 400 County high schools.

Department chairpersons or physical education teachers were asked to complete the questionnaire by recording their responses on the answer form and returning the form to the investigator within a period of one week after its arrival at the school.

The survey questionnaire focused on the following program areas: General Information, Organization of the Instructional Class, Physical Education Facilities and Equipment, Physical Education Curriculum, Problem Areas in Physical Education, and Specific Curricular Offerings. Data from each of these program areas were reported with regard to the three school classifications in Ohio (City, Exempted Village, and County), as well as the total for all senior high schools included in the survey.

In 1955, Mand surveyed 70 randomly selected school systems in Ohio to determine the status of elementary and secondary physical education programs. Data from the survey were presented to reflect the status of high school physical education programs for boys and girls in City, Exempted Village, and County schools.

In 1968 the Ohio Advisory Council for Girls' Secondary

Physical Education (hereafter to be referred to as the Advisory Council) surveyed all 1200 Ohio public junior and senior high schools to determine the status of girls' secondary physical education programs. In most instances the data from the survey reflected the responses of Ohio girls' physical education teachers from both junior and senior high schools, grades 7-12.

General Information

Of the 422 questionnaires returned, 21 were found to be incomplete and were not included in the current study. While a 70 percent return was hoped for, the educational climate in Ohio during the Spring of 1978 may have contributed to the lower returns. The concern of the high school department chairpersons or teacher designates for completing the questionnaire may have been overshadowed by financial cutbacks, unsettled contract negotiations, and desegregation orders found in many schools throughout Ohio. The 401 usable returns, 53.4 percent, did compare favorably to the 57.5 percent response reported in the 1968 Survey of Girls' Secondary Physical Education Programs. In the 1955 Study of Physical Education in Selected Elementary and Secondary Schools of Ohio, Mand reported a 74.3 percent response from a random sample of 70 Ohio school systems.

The analysis of the data on senior high school enrollments by sex indicated a close relationship between the percentage of boys and the percentage of girls for each school enrollment level. The percentages of boys and girls enrolled in physical

education classes were also similar for each school enrollment level. The actual number of boys and girls enrolled in physical education classes, however, was less than the number reported enrolled in the schools. This decrease in the number of students enrolled in physical education probably reflects the shift from required physical education programs at the ninth and tenth grades to elective programs at the eleventh and twelfth grades.

A total of 642 male teachers with primary responsibility for teaching physical education and 432 female teachers, or 15.4 percent more males than females, were reported teaching one-half load or more of physical education. Since the student enrollments in physical education classes were proportionately equal for boys and girls, the difference reported here may be the result of male physical education teachers teaching one-half loads in physical education, while female teachers were responsible for teaching full loads.

Data from the current study indicated that membership in the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation was greater among female physical educators in Ohio than among male physical educators. Similarly, a greater number of female physical educators were reported members of the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation. It is difficult to speculate as to the cause of this situation, but one possible answer may lie in the active involvement and continued affiliation of the Division of Girls and Womens Sports (D.G.W.S.) with the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Educa-

tion, and Recreation. Male coachers, on the other hand, have established separate coaches' associations with no direct affiliation with the Ohio Association.

Organization of the Instructional Class

The minimum requirement for high school physical education set forth by the State of Ohio, Department of Education, is two days per week for two years. (4) It would appear that the Ohio senior high schools included in this study were meeting the minimum requirement for physical education recommended by the Department of Education.

The Ohio Department of Education also "strongly recommends that physical education be offered on an elective basis to juniors and seniors in all schools." (4) Based on the data from the Ohio senior high schools included in this study, not all students at the eleventh or twelfth grade level were provided the opportunity to participate in an instructional physical education program. This problem may be the result of cutbacks in instructional staff, or in the continued effort to provide for the academic needs of youth.

Data from the current study indicated that the required physical education programs met or, in most instances, exceeded the daily minimum requirement of two days per week set forth by the State of Ohio, Department of Education.

Mand reported that the majority of physical education classes at the senior high school level met two days per week

and almost no classes met four or five days per week. The Advisory Council indicated that the majority of junior and senior high school girls' physical education programs met two days per week, or two days one week and three days the next. Only a small number of programs had physical education on a daily basis. Based on the data reported in the two previous studies and the current study, physical education classes meet more times per week today than they did in the past.

Bucher and LaPorte both recommended periods of 3-45 minutes of actual physical activity daily for boys and girls at the secondary level. (1, 2) The length of the physical education instructional class period* reported by the respondents in this study were consistent with the above recommendation. It would appear also that these data are similar to those reported in the two previous studies.

While the majority of respondents in the current study indicated the use of letter grades in reporting student progress in physical education, there was a slight increase from the 1968 study in the number of schools using satisfactory/unsatisfactory grades. Student failures in physical education were required to be repeated by a greater percentage of schools in the current study than in the 1968 study by the Advisory Council.

Findings of the current study indicated that student attendance and proper uniform were items used by more senior high

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*Instructional activity includes: warm-up, instruction, practice, culminating activity, and closure.

school respondents in determining physical education grades than items that are related to the stated objectives of physical education. Motor skill trsts, cognitive tests, and physical fitness tests were used to a lesser degree to determine student grades in physical education. The Advisory Council reported a greater percentage of the items listed were used to determine student grades in physical education than were reported in the current study.

Several factors may provide insight into the percentage decrease on items used to determine student grades between the 1968 study and the current findings. First, the population studied in 1968 included both junior and senior high schools and were delimited to girls' physical education programs only. The emphasis placed on student grades by junior high school and, in general, girls' physical education teachers, may have influenced the data in the 1968 study. Secondly, a greater percentage of schools in that study awarded letter grades in physical education than did schools in the current study. This factor may have provided a need to place more emphasis on discriminating student grades through the use of selected grading items.

In recent years a great deal of emphasis in the professional literature, and in teacher education programs, has been placed on developing student-centered teacher behavior. Data from the current study indicated that direct teaching and demonstration continued to dominate the teaching strategies of Ohio senior high school teachers.

The direct teaching strategies reported by the respondents

in this study may be the result, for many, of modeling the way in which they were taught physical education. Teachers' own positive experience in this type of educational climate would encourage them to pass it on to a new generation of students. A second factor that would seem to influence the teaching behavior of many relates to teachers' successful involvement in coaching, which relies almost exclusively on direct teaching strategies. This positive influence from the past and the successful experience of the present may make the establishment of alternative teaching behaviors difficult for many teachers.

Physical Education Facilities and Equipment

The majority of senior high schools included in the current study indicated the availability of a single gymnasium for instructional physical education. Of these facilities, approximately one-half were reported to be divided by a net or curtain. Two or more separate gymnasia were reported available for instructional physical education in only a small number of schools included within this study. Current data further indicate that the majority of City schools have two or more separate gymnasia or a single gymnasium with a divider, while less than one-half of the Village or County schools had these instructional facilities available.

The 1968 study reported similar findings for schools with two or more separate gymnasia and schools with a single gymnasium divided. The 1968 study, however, reported fewer schools with a

single gymnasium-no divider than was reported in the current study. A greater number of schools in the 1968 study had a gymnasium/auditorium facility than was reported by respondents in the current study.

The findings of the current study indicated that most schools had a conditioning/weight room available for the instructional program. Approximately one-fourth of the school respondents also reported the availability of a classroom, a wrestling room, and a tumbling/apparatus room. Only a few school respondents reported a swimming pool within the senior high school facility.

With the exception of the availability of a swimming pool, the 1968 study did not identify separate auxiliary teaching stations. However, a small number of respondents did indicate that such auxiliary facilities were available. Fewer in-school swimming pool facilities were reported available for instructional physical education in the 1968 study than were reported in the current study.

The increase in the instructional facilities available for physical education reported in the current study, over those reported in the 1968 study, would seem to reflect the need for more than just a gymnasium to facilitate adequately the instructional physical education program offered in the senior high schools in Ohio.

While the two previous studies did not report the total utilization of community facilities for the instructional physical education program, the current study did provide data on

several. Almost one-half of the respondents indicated the use of a community bowling alley, and over one-third reported community tennis clubs/courts were used for senior high school instructional physical education. In addition, just under one-fourth of the responding schools indicated the use of a community golf course for instructional physical education.

When asked to assess the adequacy of the available indoor facilities, a majority of the respondents indicated ample facilities. An even greater number of respondents indicated that the available outdoor facilities were ample.

Mand found considerable variability among respondents regarding the adequacy of the indoor and outdoor facilities for high school boys and girls. In general, the girls' indoor and outdoor facilities were reported to be ample by a greater percentage of respondents than were the boys' facilities. Outdoor facilities for both boys and girls were reported to be ample by a greater percentage of respondents than the available indoor facilities.

In attempting to compare the data from the two studies, there would appear to be some improvement in the adequacy of the available indoor and outdoor facilities for instructional physical education in Ohio senior high schools.

Physical Education Curriculum

Of the four universal objectives of physical education, more than one-third of the respondents in the current study

selected physical fitness as the most important student outcome of the senior high school physical education program. Sports skills was indicated as the next most important student outcome.

In comparing the response to this item with the responses to two other survey questions, an interesting concept of physical fitness develops. As reported earlier, physical fitness tests were ranked sixth among the several items used to determine student grades in physical education. In a later question respondents ranked physical fitness tests second or third among eight basic physical education activities for boys-only, girls-only, and coeducational programs. These findings would seem to suggest that while the value of physical fitness for the student is considered most important, the testing emphasis indicated within the program is for student appreciation and not for the purpose of determining student grades.

While most respondents in the current study indicated that students not physically or mentally capable of unlimited physical activity were allowed either to participate in the regular instructional program to the degree permitted by their disability, or to participate in an individualized activity program, some respondents excused students from participating in the instructional program or assigned them to clerical duties. Clearly, the full impact of recent legislation regarding instructional opportunities for handicapped students has not been implemented by the respondents. The reality of this situation is further exposed when only a few respondents viewed mainstreaming as a crucial problem confronting Ohio senior high school instructional

physical education programs.

It would appear from the data that not all respondent schools were in compliance with the basic intent of Title IX. Those schools not in compliance may have been part of those who indicated Title IX to be the most crucial problem confronting Ohio senior high school physical education programs.

Problem Areas in Physical Education

While Title IX ranked second among the problems facing Ohio physical educators, a high percentage of the respondents indicated that pupil motivation and discipline was the number one problem. Large class instruction was identified as the third most crucial problem by school respondents.

The identification of pupil motivation and discipline as the major problem confronting Ohio high school physical education was reinforced by the selection of in-service programs most desired by school respondents. A majority of respondents indicated that a one day or extended period in-service workshop should be offered to discuss the innovative teaching of individual/dual and team sports activities.

In comparing the data from the current study with those of the 1968 study, there appeared to be a change in what was determined the most crucial problem in Ohio senior high school physical education. Large classes was identified by one-fourth of the respondents in the 1968 study as the most crucial problem, while only a small percentage of the respondents in the current

study considered class size a problem. On the other hand, only a small number of respondents in the 1968 study identified discipline to be a problem, while almost one-third of the respondents in the current study considered motivation and discipline to be the major problem to be resolved.

Specific Curricular Offerings

The number one ranked team sports activity offered in the schools was volleyball. Regardless of the program area, boys-only, girls-only, coeducational, or the grade level 9-10-11-12, volleyball was the top ranked team sport. With the emphasis placed on basketball as an activity for recreation and varsity sport, this finding came as a surprise. Basketball was, however, ranked second or third, along with softball, depending on the program area or grade level.

Similar findings were reported by the Advisory Council with volleyball ranked as the number one team sport for grades 10-11-12. Respondents ranked volleyball second to softball for freshmen girls. Basketball and softball were also ranked second or third in the 1968 study.

What appeared to be clear from an analysis of the findings of the two studies was that these three traditional team sports receive a major emphasis in Ohio public senior high schools. This may suggest a maturing of the senior high school physical education program and point to the desirability of student par-

ticipation in these activities. This situation may, however, speak to a failure on the part of the profession to identify other team sports that would be appropriate for instruction and participation at the senior high school level.

In an attempt to provide an overall picture of the Ohio senior high school instructional physical education curriculum for the schools participating in this study, a rank order of the top 15 activities reported by grade level and program area was developed. The rank order of activities was based on the percentage of respondents offering the activity.

Volleyball, softball, and basketball dominated as the most popular activities offered in boys-only, girls-only programs for all senior high school grade levels. Boys-only programs for the ninth and tenth grades continued with touch football, stunts/tumbling, track, and soccer, while girls-only programs included stunts/tumbling, track, balance beam, and badminton. A definite shift toward individual/dual activities was noted in the boys-only and girls-only programs for the eleventh and twelfth grades. Tennis and badminton were ranked either fourth or fifth depending on the program and grade level.

While volleyball and softball continued to be the most popular activities offered in the coeducational program for all four senior high school grades, an emphasis toward the inclusion of individual/dual and non-team sports activities was noted, beginning with the tenth grade. Basketball dropped to sixth, with badminton, stunts/tumbling, and tennis ranked third, fourth, and fifth respectively. This shift continued for the eleventh

and twelfth grades, with individual/dual and non-team sports being ranked higher and the more traditional team sports being included less often within the instructional program.

Based on the ranking of the top 15 physical education activities offered in the respondent schools, several observations can be made regarding the instructional physical education program in the Ohio public senior high schools included within this study. First, volleyball was clearly the most popular instructional activity offered to students regardless of the grade level or program area. Second, the team sports of basketball and softball continued to dominate the instructional physical education curriculum of the respondent schools. Third, the shift toward offering more individual/dual and non-team sports activities for students in the upper grades were evidenced in respondent schools with coeducational physical education programs. With the responsibility for all public senior high schools to implement coeducational classes in physical education in order to be in compliance with Title IX, the trend noted above may provide the answer to a concern expressed in an article written some 10 years ago regarding Ohio senior high school physical education. The article, authored by officers in the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation, stated:

> Comprehensive physical education programs do not exist in most schools. They also believe that pupils seldom have opportunities to learn how to use their bodies in ways that will keep them healthy throughout life.

> And most Ohio boys and girls complete high school without really being introduced to the important lifetime sports. (6)

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings and within the limitations of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Membership in the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation is not important to the majority of the physical education teachers in the public senior high schools of Ohio.

2. The public senior high schools of Ohio are meeting the required minimum standards for ninth and tenth grade physical education recommended by the Department of Education.

3. Many eleventh and twelfth grade students in Ohio public senior high schools are not given the opportunity to participate in an instructional physical education program.

4. Indoor and outdoor facilities are sufficient for instructional physical education in Ohio senior high schools.

5. Physical fitness is the most important student outcome of the instructional physical education program in Ohio senior high schools.

6. The instructional physical education programs in the public senior high schools of Ohio are not meeting the special needs of the physically and mentally handicapped student.

7. Lifetime sports activities are emphasized most in those high schools which have coeducational physical education programs.

Implementations

In light of the findings and conclusions of the investigation, the following implementations are suggested:

1. The results of this study can be used to assist the State Department of Education in the proposed revision of the Ohio Guide For Girls' Secondary Physical Education.

2. The Board of Directors of the Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation can study the results of this investigation in order to determine potential conference and workshop programs to benefit Ohio public school administrators and physical education teachers.

3. Superintendents of public school districts, high school principals, and physical education administrators and teachers can utilize the results of this study to compare their senior high school instructional physical education program with similar programs from throughout the state of Ohio.

4. Teacher education faculties in Ohio colleges and universities preparing physical education teachers can use the results of this study in designing and revising course content at both the undergraduate and graduate level.

Recommendations

In light of the results of this study, the following recommendations for further research are proposed:

1. Further analysis of the data is recommended to determine the effect of variables other than school classification on item responses of the questionnaire.

2. A "benchmark" is only of value when it is utilized; therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated in the future and a comparison be made of those new findings with the current findings of this investigation.

3. In depth research into various sections of the questionnaire is recommended, i.e., membership in professional organizations, programs for the handicapped, innovative teaching, etc.

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